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AZTEC ACE

The PENUMBRA

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ON THE RACKS

TALES OF TERROR no. 2
More horror with an edge! Look for the strange woman with "A Fine Head on Her Shoulders" by Dixon & Micheluzzi; "Live-In Dead" drawn by Eric Vincent; and more chiller thrills!

THE OFFICIAL TEEN TITANS INDEX no. 2
The first issue is already a collector's item. Now, part 2 of the 5 issue series that tells everything there is to know about The Teen Titans, including reproductions of every cover!

CUTEY BUNNY no. 5
Joshua Quagmire's fabulous comic is now available through Eclipse! Don't miss the X-Critters vs. Capt. Huey and The Nice Guy League of America! And you ain't seen nothing until you've seen ... Dark Cutey!

BEDLAM! no. 1 and 2
An amazing 2 issue collection of stories by two of today's most popular artists: Steve (Swamp Thing) Bissette and Rick (The One) Veitch. Pick up both issues, in color for the first time!

AZTEC ACE no. 15
Is this the end of Aztec Ace? Find out in this last issue story, "Relax! Bridget Goes to Hollywood!" — In 1932! But is she unraveling a kink in time or creating one? This is your only chance to find out!

SCOUT no. 1
It's 1999 and if you're not dead, you're crazy! Scout is very much alive and no one can accuse him of being sane! It's future shock by Tim Truman! Plus, "Fashion in Action," back-up by J.K. Snyder III.

MIRACLEMAN no. 2
The first issue sold out before it was printed! Alan Moore and Garry Leach return with the hottest new comic in the world!

THE NEW DNAgents no. 1
Pushed back from last month, this is the premiere ALL-NEW issue. Dr. Harden's secret is revealed!

JOHNNY NEMO no. 1
The first issue in a 6-part mini-series. The science fiction adventures of New London's foremost private eye! Plus, "Sindi Shade" back-up!

A PAGE OF INFORMATION:

I want to take just one of my several Penumbras this month to let everybody know about a few free (and not so free) offers of merchandise from Eclipse.

Okay, here we go:

FREE POSTERS: We have put together a whole bunch of free full colour posters for you, but you'll have to pay postage on them. New this summer are posters on SCOUT (Tim Truman art)

JOHNNY NEMO (Brett Ewins)
MIRACLEMAN (Garry Leach)
DNAGENTS (Mitch Schauer)
SUN-RUNNERS (Glen Johnson)
ROCKETEER (Dave Stevens)

and, in very limited supply —

MAGGIE & JIGGS (George McManus)

and, a few still left from last year:

ZOT! (Scott McCloud art)

To get these posters (all of which measure 11 x 17 inches, except the MAGGIE & JIGGS one, which is 17 x 22 inches), you have to send us a self-addressed stamped 9 x 12 envelope with 39 cents postage attached to it. Write on each envelope you send us the name of the poster you want. Offer good while supplies last, and like that.

BACK ISSUES: If you check out the inside back cover of most Eclipse comics, you'll see a back issue ad. PLEASE DON'T CUT THE BACK COVER OFF OF YOUR COMICS TO SEND IN THE COUPON! Just xerox it, or if that's too much trouble, simply write (by hand or typewriter) the titles and issue numbers you need along with the price AND YOUR ADDRESS. Don't send cash in the mail unless you have no bank account and are under 12 years old. Don't send foreign currency. If you live in a foreign country and can't get U.S. funds, send us the equivalent dollar value in the form of International Postal Reply Coupons. They are worth about 37 cents each now, but check with your postmaster to be sure.

NON-THREE-D COMICS: We are putting out several 3-D comics this fall and winter, but many people cannot see in 3-D, due to some sort of stereoptic impairment. If you cannot see 3-D, we will send you a special NON 3-D edition of our 3-D comics, with the same colour cover but b&w interior pages, plus a special editorial message from your non-stereoptic editor-in-chieftess. The print-run on this special edition will be limited to 100 signed copies at $5.00 each (sorry, but low print-runs cost more per unit and Eclipse will be losing money on them as it is). They will not be available through dealers or wholesalers: you must write to me and tell me how come you can't see 3-D and I'll personally shoot your copy off to you when they are ready.

OTHER ITEMS FOR SALE: We are now distributing Ken Pierce and Tony Raiola newspaper strip reprints through direct mail order as well as through the regular wholesaler-retailer network. See the above paragraph on how not to mutilate your comics when you order these items.

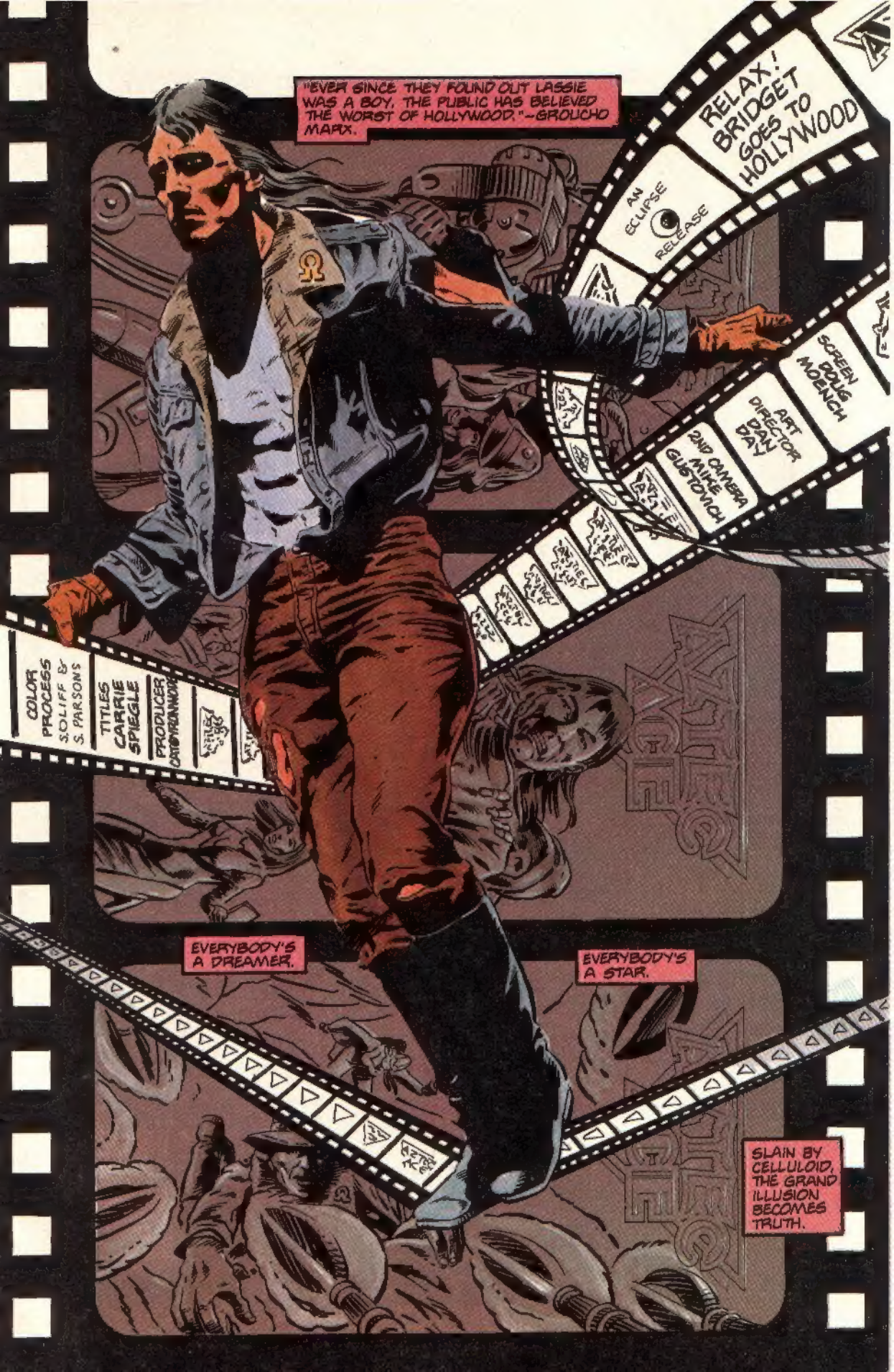
Thanks, and that's it for the hard sell this month —

cat yronwode

IN YOUR HANDS

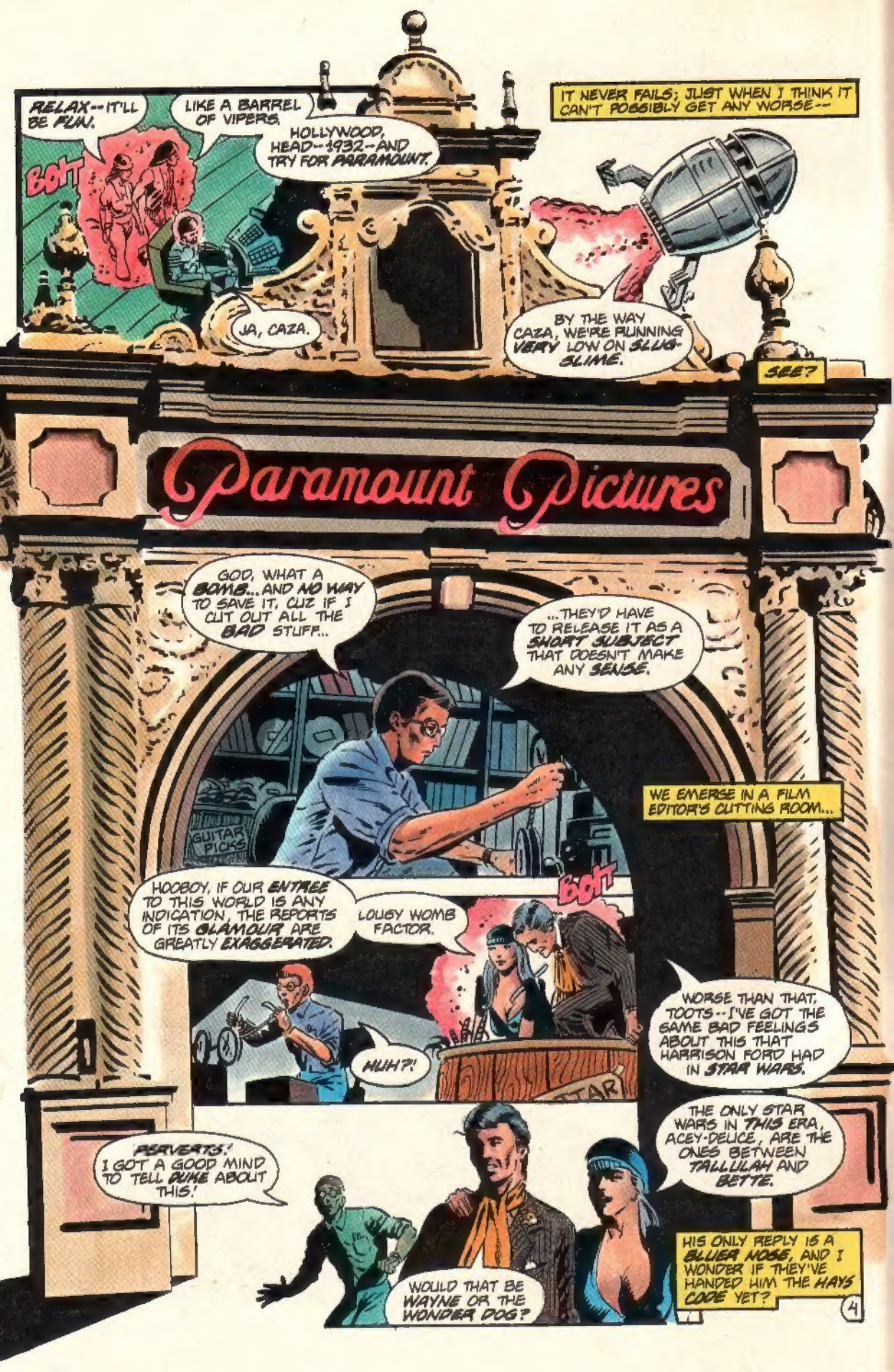
Time travellers beware! The story you are about to read is true . . . or is it?! Is Bridget's career as a screen star for real or is it just the stuff that dreams are made of? There's only one way to tell, bunkies, and that's by starting on page one!

AZTEC ACE (ISSN 0747-783X) No. 15, September 1985. Published by Eclipse Comics, P. O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. catherine yronwode, Editor. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Aztec Ace © 1985 Doug Moench; art © 1985 Day and Gustovich. All other material © 1985 Eclipse Comics. All rights reserved. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada


"EVER SINCE THEY FOUND OUT LASSIE WAS A BOY, THE PUBLIC HAS BELIEVED THE WORST OF HOLLYWOOD."~GROUCHO MARX.
RELAX! BRIDGET GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
AN ECLIPSE RELEASE
SCREEN DOUG MOENCH
ART DIRECTOR DAN DAY
2ND CAMERA MIKE GUSTOVICH
COLOR PROCESS SOLIFF & S. PARSONS
TITLES CARRIE SPIEGLE
PRODUCER CATO/RANNOU
EVERYBODY'S A DREAMER.
EVERYBODY'S A STAR.
SLAIN BY CELLULOID, THE GRAND ILLUSION BECOMES TRUTH.

NERO WATCHES AS ROME BURNS..
HOLY MOLEY! NEXT TO CHARLES LAUGHTON--THAT'S ME UP THERE!
I'M TELLING YOU--THAT'S NOT AN ACTRESS, ACE!
QUIET. YOU GODDAM HIPPIES-- GO TAKE YOUR DRUGS AND HALLUCINATE SOMEWHERE ELSE!
THAT'S REALLY ME UP ON THE SCREEN!!
AN SO IN SILENCE WE WATCH, AS OUR EYES BURN.
IT'S MIDNIGHT WHEN WE EMERGE FROM THE TIMES SQUARE REVIVAL THEATER IN 1969, SIX YEARS BEFORE IT TURNS TO KUNG FU AND PORN.
Coca-Cola
ACE, I WAS THIRTEEN WHEN THAT MOVIE WAS MADE...
SIGN OF THE CROSS
CECIL B. DEMILLE
SEEING IT WHEN IT WAS FIRST RELEASED WAS MY BIRTHDAY PRESENT THAT YEAR.
SO WHAT'S THE POOP? A DOXIE-GLITCH? AN EBONATI DOPPELGANGER OF ME? OR WHAT--?
CLEARLY, BRIDGET, IT'S A BIT-PART YOU SOMEHOW LANDED.
LET'S HITCH BACK TO PUER'S PLACE AND TRY TO LEARN HOW.
2

SOON, IN A BACK ROOM ON 23RD STREET...
THE LAST TRIP
HEAD SHOP
ALL RIGHT, PUER, THAT'S ENOUGH.
STRAINING YOURSELF WON'T DO ANY GOOD.
SORRY, CAZA...
...BUT I WARNED YOU MY EXTRA-TEMPORAL PERCEPTION IS SHOT--WASTED EVER SINCE THE EBONATI'S CLEOPATRA EXCHANGE.
WORSE, PUER--YOU'VE BEEN UNABLE TO "REMEMBER OTHER TIMES" EVER SINCE THE KINSOLVING CAPER.
YES...BUT WHY WOULD THE TIMELINE IGNORE SUCH AN OBVIOUS PARADOX, AND BE UNAFFECTED BY IT?
AND AN EVEN BIGGER BUMMER IS THE TIME-SPIRAL MAP --NO SCORCH ANYWHERE NEAR 1932.
I GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVTA CHECK IT OUT, ACEY-DEUCE.
SHIT. WE DROP OFF PUER HERE AT HIS HEAD SHOP, DECIDE TO CATCH A MOVIE WHILE WE'RE IN '69 --AND THEN THIS.
JUDGIN' BY HER ULTRABRITES, CAZA, YOUR FOXY LADY DON'T SEE IT AS SUCH A DRAG...
I JUST SAW MYSELF UP ON THE SILVER SCREEN, PUER-- AND BESIDES, THERE ARE A LOT WORSE TRIPS THAN HOLLYWOOD IN THE THIRTIES.
MAYBE THIS'LL TAKE SOME OF THE GLOOM OFF THE LOU KINSOLVING TRIP AND SEEING THAT PHONEY CLEOPATRA DIE LIKE THAT.
MIGHTY BLITHE, BRIDGET. ON TOP OF ALL OUR OTHER WEIRDNESS, ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO BRAVE THE REALITY-ONCE-REMOVED OF LOTUS LAND?
ANYTHING FOR A KICK, ACEY-DEUCE.
BOIT
STAY COOL, YOU TWO.
3


RELAX--IT'LL BE FUN.
LIKE A BARREL OF VIPERS.
HOLLYWOOD, HEAD--1932--AND TRY FOR PARAMOUNT.
BOT
JA, CAZA.
BY THE WAY CAZA, WE'RE RUNNING VERY LOW ON SLUG-SLIME.
IT NEVER FAILS; JUST WHEN I THINK IT CAN'T POSSIBLY GET ANY WORSE--
SEE?
Paramount Pictures
GOD, WHAT A BOMB...AND NO WAY TO SAVE IT, CUZ IF I CUT OUT ALL THE BAD STUFF...
...THEY'D HAVE TO RELEASE IT AS A SHORT SUBJECT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
WE EMERGE IN A FILM EDITOR'S CUTTING ROOM...
GUITAR PICKS
HOOBOY, IF OUR ENTREE TO THIS WORLD IS ANY INDICATION, THE REPORTS OF ITS GLAMOUR ARE GREATLY EXAGGERATED.
LOUSY WOMB FACTOR.
BOT
HUH?!
WORSE THAN THAT, TOOTS--I'VE GOT THE SAME BAD FEELINGS ABOUT THIS THAT HARRISON FORD HAD IN STAR WARS.
THE ONLY STAR WARS IN THIS ERA, ACEY-DEUCE, ARE THE ONES BETWEEN TALLULAH AND BETTE.
PERVERTS! I GOT A GOOD MIND TO TELL DUKE ABOUT THIS!
HIS ONLY REPLY IS A BLUER NOSE, AND I WONDER IF THEY'VE HANDED HIM THE HAYS CODE YET?
WOULD THAT BE WAYNE OR THE WONDER DOG?
4

FROM THE CUTTING ROOM, WE BLUNDER ONTO A SOUNDSTAGE IN FULL SWING...
AZTEC ACE
15
MORE RAIN AND WIND!
AND YOU TWO--YEAH, YOU!
TIME IS MONEY, YA KNOW!
GET INTO THAT CROWD WITH ALL THE OTHER EXTRAS!
WE OBLIGE, WISHING TO...UM, AVOID A SCENE.
IT BACKFIRES.
WHAT DO WE DO?
ACTION!!
EVERYONE COMES ABRUPTLY TO LIFE, JOSTLING US IN THE FALSE RAIN...
AND THEN--
CUT!!
NOT MUCH, APPARENTLY.
AS THE VIRGIN SAID, THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT?
5

GIVING A SHORT LAUGH, BRIDGET MAKES A BEELINE FOR THE MEN BY THE CAMERAS AND IT IS ONLY NOW (EVEN AS I CRINGE AT HER RECKLESSNESS) THAT I NOTICE HOW WELL THE INFINITY CLOSET HAS SERVED HER THIS TIME...
ALL RIGHT, KIDS, THAT'S A WRAP--WE WON'T BE NEEDING YOU AGAIN UNTIL NEXT TUESDAY.
EXCUSE ME, BUT I'M LOOKING FOR THE SIGN OF THE CROSS...
THAT'S FUNNY, YOU DON'T LOOK RELIGIOUS --BUT IN ANY CASE, DEMILLE'S LOCATED FIVE SOUND-STAGES OVER.
OH. I, UH... MY AGENT GOT ME CONFUSED, YOU SEE, AND WHEN I ARRIVED HERE A LITTLE LATE, I--
FORGET THE BIBLE, SUGAR. YOU'VE GOT LOOKS AND YOUR VOICE AIN'T BAD EITHER--NICE AND THADATY.
HOW'S ABOUT WE SPEND THE WEEKEND UP AT SAN SIMEON AND DISCUSS A BIGGER PART IN MY NEXT PICTURE? MAYBE EVEN SOME DIALOGUE?
UH... THANKS, BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO INCLUDE ME OUT.
SHE SAID NO.
TO ME.
TO A WEEKEND.
TO SAN SIMEON.
TO A PART.
TO DIALOGUE, FOR GOD'S SAKE!
IN TWO WORDS: IM-POSSIBLE... UNLESS SHE'S ANOTHER ONE RUINED BY OOOP, THAT STALLION BASTARD.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE RISKED THAT, BRIDGET.
6

DUKE, YOU'RE THE STUDIO DICK.
WORKIN' ON ANY BIG CASES RIGHT NOW?
HGULG!?
UH, NO, SIR-- JUST MAINTAININ' THE USUAL SECURITY ON THE LOT.
THEN I WANT YOU TO NOSE THAT DAME, DUKE--FIND OUT WHO SHE IS, WHAT HER STORY'S ALL ABOUT.
FOLLOW ME?
YEAH, YOU WANT ME TO FOLLOW HER-- AND SHE IS QUITE A TOMATO, SIR.
HEY--YA GOTTA SIGN OUT BEFORE LEAVIN' THE LOT.
OOPS.
HEY, SISTER, COMIN' BACK FOR CASTING CALL TOMORROW?
UH, ACTUALLY I HADN'T PLANNED--
BUT YOU'RE THE PERFECT LOOK FOR PRODUCTION 601 ON STAGE SIX! YOUR PHONE NUMBER?
UH, IS STAGE SIX SIGN OF THE--
SHE DOESN'T HAVE A PHONE HERE.
NEW IN TOWN, EH? NO WONDER I AIN'T NOTICED YOU, SISTER. WELL, JUST BE AT THE GATE EIGHT SHARP.
ACE, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, BUT JUST 'CAUSE THEY MOVE FAST AROUND HERE DOESN'T MEAN WE MAYBE SHOULDN'T RELAX AND LET THINGS TAKE THEIR COURSE.
AFTER ALL, NOW I'M IN TWO MOVIES THAT WE KNOW OF AND YOU'RE EVEN IN ONE, AND NO GLITCH HAS POPPED THE WALLPAPER YET.
OH, LOOK, THERE'S CARY GRANT-- DOESN'T SEEM REAL, DOES HE?

LET'S SEE YOUR SIGN-OUT SHEET, HAL.

YEAH...AND SOME NAME ON HER...

IN

OUT

SURE, DUKE. REAL LOOKER, HUH?

"BRIDGET, IF HOLLYWOOD ITSELF ISN'T THE BIGGEST GLITCH REALITY'S EVER SUFFERED, THEN I'M VILMA BANKY..."

BUT SUPPOSING WE WENT THROUGH WITH THIS LUNACY...WHAT NEXT?

AND WHAT DO I DO WHILE YOU'RE BUSY BECOMING A STAR?

WE SEE ABOUT GETTING A PHONE-- AND A PLACE TO KEEP IT IN.

WELL, I HEAR HOLLYWOOD GIGOLOS LOUNGE AROUND FOLLOWING THEIR LADIES' PROGRESS IN VARIETY WHILE WAITING FOR THEM TO GET HOME.

IT DOES SEEM YOU'RE THE STAR OF THIS ONE...

HMM...LOOK AT THE LINE AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THAT HOUSE...

PROBABLY CLARA BOW'S PLACE--AND THE STARTING LINEUP OF THE USC FOOTBALL TEAM.

IF WE LOOK HARD, ACCORDING TO KENNETH ANGER, WE MIGHT SEE A YOUNG JOHN WAYNE.

NICE NEIGHBORHOOD.

MAYBE WE SHOULD GET A PLACE AROUND HERE...WITH BINOCULARS.

GLAD YOU DECIDED TO BOIT ABOARD FOR A WHILE, PUER.

WAITING FOR THE TWO STOOGES TO WRAP UP THEIR TEMPORAL MAYHEM TENDS TO GET BORING.

YOU THINK THIS IS BORING, JACK, TRY CRASHIN' IN A HEAD SHOP ON 23RD STREET IN 1969.

ANYWAY, NOW THAT I'M CUT OFF FROM ETP-ING OTHER TIMES, I'M FEELIN' THE ITCH TO GET DOWN WITH YOU CATS AGAIN.

CHECKMATE, TEMPUS, M'MAN.

GOTT IN HIMMEL! HOW DID YOU--

PUER-- TRES CHIC TO SEE YOU AGAIN, DARLING.

BOTT

HEY, BABE, WHAT'S HAPPENIN'?

WE'VE GOT TRASHY DIGS IN HOLLYWOOD AND THE STARLET HERE HAS HAD SMALL BITS IN THREE FILMS SO FAR--

--NONE OF THEM SIGN OF THE CROSS.

HOOKED UP WITH YET ANOTHER IRRELEVANT FILM AND THE GLITCHES ARE PROBABLY INCUBATING AT A RATE EVEN RABBITS COULDN'T--

HER NEXT ONE IS MAMOULIAN'S JEKYLL AND HYDE, BUT I SAY NONE OF DEMILLE'S PEOPLE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT--AND THE NINETEENTH EDITION OF HALLIWELL'S FILM-GOER'S COMPANION SAY'S I'M RIGHT.

HMM, THIS IS INTERESTING, ACEY-DEUCE...

ONE OF THE ASSISTANTS ON SIGN OF THE CROSS WAS JOE RITTMAN, AND IF I REMEMBER MY FANZINE GOSSIP RIGHT--

--JOE RITTMAN WAS A FREQUENT GUEST AT SAN SIMEON.

SAN... SIMEON--?

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, MY TALL, THIN, HANDSOME GIGOLO--HEARST'S LAWN IS BOUND TO BE CRAWLING WITH SLUGS.

SO WE BURROW FROM THE BARREL OF SCRAPPED FILM, RENT A ROADSTER, AND TOOL ON UP THE COAST

BRIDGET IS TICKLED AND THRILLED TO A TIZZY, BUT I'M JUST PLAIN TICKED

WE'RE DIGGING A DEEPER AND DEEPER HOLE FROM WHICH AN ARMY OF DORIS GLITCHES WILL INEVITABLY RISE LIKE ZOMBIES FROM *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*.

—CARRYING A GUN IN YOUR POCKET OR ARE YOU JUST GLAD TO SEE ME?

WONDERFULLY FILTHY, MAE, BUT DON'T LET WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEAR IT—HE'S A WORLD-CLASS *PRUDE*.

SOMEDAY, MARION, I'VE *GOTTA* WRITE A MOVIE ABOUT YOUR SUGARDADDY.

NO, MANK—W.R. WOULD START A W-WORLD-WAR TO PREVENT IT!

TELL ME DOES HE NIBBLE YOUR "ROSEBUD" *EVERY* NIGHT?

D-DON'T T-TALK LIKE THAT, MANK—N-NOT EVEN IF YOU *ARE* D-DRUNK!

THE MONSTER YOU KNOW, IS THE BEST FRIEND I EVER HAD.

ALL RIGHT, MAE SO YOU'RE A BIG GIRL MAKING GOOD IN A SMALL TOWN, BUT WHAT'S YOUR *REAL* CLAIM TO FAME?

I'VE BEEN THINGS AND SEEN PLACES, BIG BOY.

HOOBOY. ACE, THIS JOINT'S ALMOST AS BIG AS THE *ANACHRONY DEN!*

OH, KATE, YOU'RE JUST BEING *MODEST* ABOUT YOUR TALENT

NOT AT ALL— I WAS SIMPLY FORTUNATE TO BE BORN WITH A SET OF CHARACTERISTICS IN THE PUBLIC VOGUE.

UNABLE TO STOMACH ANY MORE FROM THOSE WHO CLAIM THEY CAN'T STOMACH IT, I FLEE TO A BALCONY...

WHO ARE THOSE TWO DELICIOUS PEOPLE?

I DUNNO--THE GUY LOOKS MEXICAN AND THE GIRL LOOKS LIKE ...LIKE...WHO?

WHOEVER SHE IS, SHE'S GOT MORE "IT" THAN THIS TOWN'S SEEN IN YEARS.

PERHAPS..BUT "IT" IS SICK.

I PREDICT YOU'RE A FUTURE STAR, BABE.

YOU THINK SO?

YEAH--AND ACTING WON'T HAVE A THING TO DO WITH IT.

YOU WOULDN'T BE JOE MITTMAN, WOULD YOU?

BUT WHO IS SHE?

I THOUGHT SHE CAME WITH YOU.

LET'S FACE IT--SHE'S CHARMED US ALL.

FOR AN INGENUE, THIS DAME FLIES IN HIGH CIRCLES.

FINALLY SAW HER SHE'S SLIPPIN' OUTSIDE...

BUT WHAT THE HELL'S SHE DOIN'?

WELL, CLEO, I SEE YOU CAME FOR THE WEEK-END AFTER ALL--ALAS, NOT WITH ME.

LOSE AN EARRING?

EH--? "CLEO"?

SURPRISED I KNOW YOUR NAME, MISS JONES? BELIEVE ME, WHEN I'M OBSESSED, I'M OBSESSED.

SEE YOU AROUND...AND BET ON IT.

HOOBOY.

NOW DO YOU SEE WHY I DON'T LIKE THIS WHOLE SCENE, MISS "CLEO JONES"?

AND I'M WARNING YOU, IF MARION DAVIES STARTS A JIGSAW PUZZLE, THIS GIGOLO IS VAMOOSING.

AW, RELAX, WILLYA? ENJOY THE OPULENCE. YOU AND ME'VE SAVED THE WORLD A DOZEN TIMES--WE DESERVE A BREAK.

BESIDES, THIS IS A WORKING HOLIDAY--I'VE ALREADY NAILED DOWN TWO MORE PARTS AND THREE SLUGS.

JUICY LITTLE BUGGERS TOO--HEARST KEEPS HIS LAWN WATERED, BABY.

AND SO A WEEK PASSES--FOR BRIDGET IN FRONT OF CAMERAS--FOR ME, IN A RATTY BUNGALOW NEAR FROM SAN SIMEON.

IT'S GOING TOO FAR, BRIDGET!

YOU'VE DONE FIVE PICTURES NOW--NONE OF WHICH YOU EVER APPEARED IN--AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN TO THE ONLY ONE WE KNOW YOU DID APPEAR IN!

YEAH, BUT GOTTA ADMIT...MY CAREER IS REALLY TAKIN' OFF.

IT'S WORSE THAN SERIOUS; SHE'S IN LOVE WITH AN IMAGINED IMAGE.

WE'RE NOT RECTIFYING AN ANOMALY HERE, BRIDGET! ALL YOU'RE DOING IS CREATING GROUNDS FOR CELLULOID DOXIE-GLITCHES AT THE RATE OF 26 PER SECOND!
AIN'T A SINGLE GLITCH IN SIGHT AND YOU KNOW IT... SO RELAX, ACEY-DEUCE, AND PEEL ME A GRAPE, WILLYA?
HOOBOY, INDEED
AND SO THE LUNATIC CHARADE GOES...
I TAKE TO LONG, STRANGE,
CUT!
AND BRIDGET-BABE, YOU WERE GREAT--WON'T BE LONG BEFORE WE PUT YOU IN SOME SPEAKING ROLES.
AIMLESS WANDERINGS IN DRY HEAT...
BRIDGET'S GETTING MORE PHONEY ALL THE TIME, ACTING ALL THE TIME.
IN FACT, SHE HASN'T BEEN RIGHT SINCE THE CLEOPATRA GAMBIT.. SO IT'S NOT JUST THE STARS IN HER EYES.
WAS I PREMATURE IN PUTTING MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT HER TO REST?
ANGELS
HOLLYWOOD LAND

IF I WEREN'T FOR THE DAMNED PUZZLE OF SEEING HER IN DEMILLE'S SIGN OF THE CROSS, THIS IS ONE TIME I'D FLEE STRAIGHT INTO THE GOLDEN MELD
INSTEAD, I RETURN TO OUR SHABBY RAT-TRAP BUNGALOW FOR ANOTHER ARGUMENT.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVTA TELL YOU TO RELAX, FOR PITY'S SAKE!
WHO SAYS A MISSION--JUST ONE--CAN'T BE A PARTY?
BRIDGET, I'VE RARELY KNOWN PARADOX TO BE FESTIVE.
YEAH? WHAT ABOUT THAT TIME UP ON GALILEO'S RAFTERS?
THAT WASN'T FUN.
IT WAS.. BITTERSWEET
SEE? ALREADY YOU SOUND LIKE A FILM CRITIC...
...SO GIMME A REVIEW ON THIS GOWN--HOW DO I LOOK FOR MY DATE WITH HAROLD LLOYD'S AGENT?
HE'S TAKING ME TO EL MOCAMBO.
HAROLD LLOYD IS WASHED UP! TALKIES ARE IN NOW!
JEALOUS, ACEY-DEUCE? HE'S STILL VERY RICH, AND THIS IS THE LAND OF DREAMS, REMEMBER--HIS AGENT COULD ALWAYS MASTERMIND A COME-BACK
HISTORY SAYS HE DIDN'T MAKE A COME-BACK--HE JUST FETERED OUT.
SO? HE MADE THAT SAFETY LAST SILENT COMEDY--IN 1923, NO LESS!--
--WHERE HE HANGS FROM THE HANDS OF A BROKEN CLOCK, AND IF THAT AIN'T A CLUE BRING ON SIDNEY TOLER AND WARNER OLAND, NOT TO MENTION MYRNA LOY AND WILLIAM POWELL!
DON'T FORGET TO GET ASTA'S PAWPRINT IN YOUR AUTOGRAPH BOOK--IF NOT OVER YOUR NAVEL.

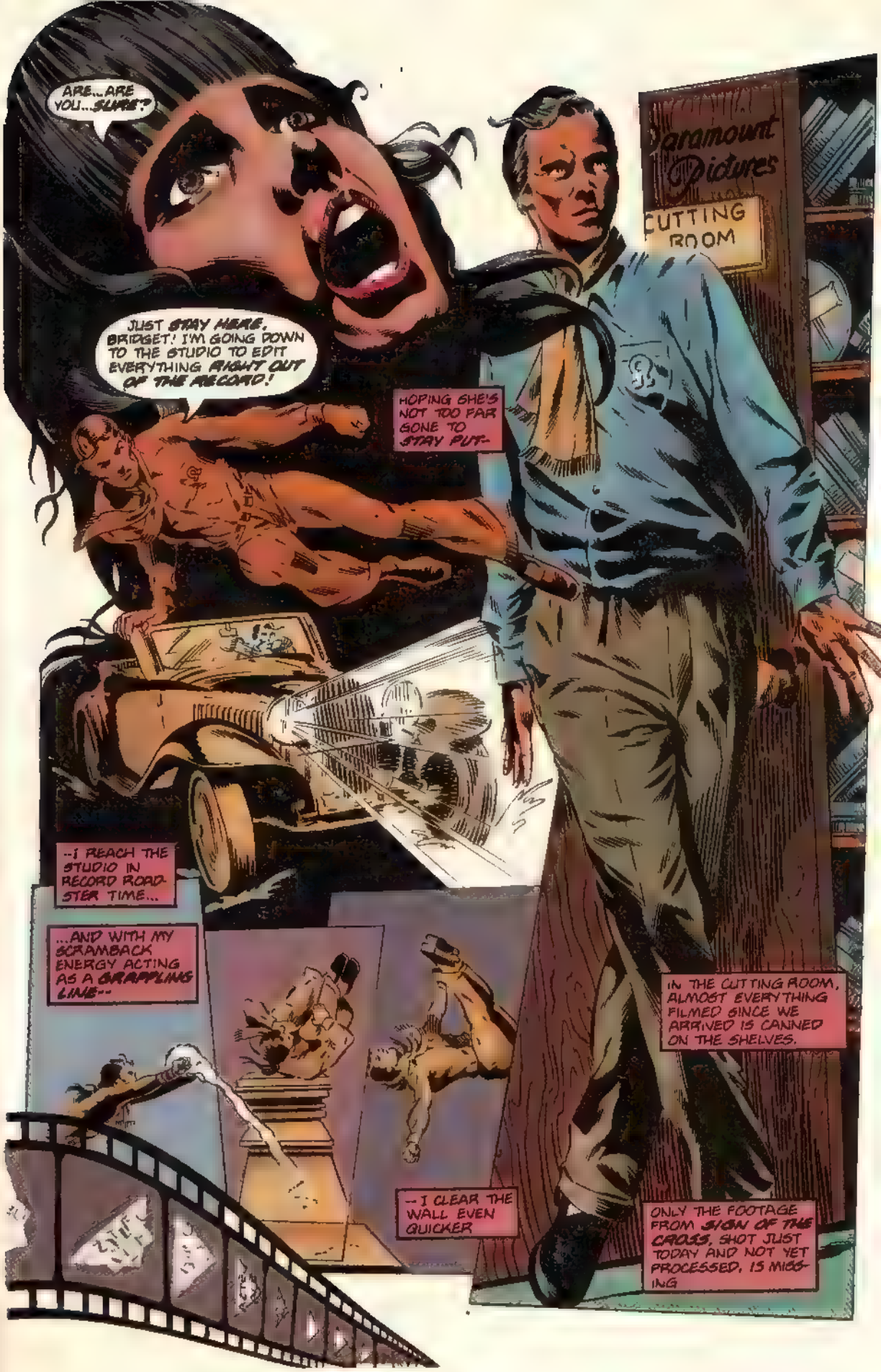
LOOK, ACE, I'M IN THAT MOVIE, RIGHT? WE SAW THE PROOF IN 1969, MEANING I HAD TO COME BACK HERE TO 1932 TO FILM THE MOVIE—OTHERWISE THE PROOF ON FILM COULDN'T EXIST.
SO MAYBE THIS MYSTERY'S SOLUTION IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE FULFILLMENT OF A LITTLE GIRL'S LIFELONG WISH.
RIGHT. ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR SEXPOT. WHY DIDN'T I DEDUCE THAT?
SAY, DO YOU THINK JEAN HARLOW CARRIES A LITTLE THERMOS COOLER IN HER HANDBAG?
SAY WHAT?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW WE STARLETS SCORN BRASSIERES HERE IN THE EARLY THIRTIES?
RANDOLPH WAS TELLING ME BETWEEN TAKES ON THE LOT TODAY THAT JEAN USES ICE-CUBES TO KEEP HER POINTS HARD...
...BUT THAT ONLY WORKS FOR A FEW MINUTES IN THIS CLIMATE, SO I WAS JUST WONDERING WHERE SHE KEPT A FRESH SUPPLY.
I COUNT SLOWLY AND SILENTLY TO TEN, FREEZING MY FAINT SMILE THROUGH THE SLOW BURN.
IF YOU'RE QUITE FINISHED WITH YOUR TITILLATING TINSEL TOWN LORE, PERHAPS YOU MIGHT EXPLAIN HOW A LITTLE GIRL'S LIFE-LONG WISH ACCOUNTS FOR YOUR APPEARANCE IN SIGN OF THE CROSS, HM?
OH YEAH, ALMOST FORGOT...

THE WAY I SEE IT...
...ONCE I HOOKED UP WITH YOUR TIME-TRAVEL ABILITY, IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE I'D TRIP TO MY FAVORITE TIME--THE DREAM FACTORY WHERE THEY MADE ALL THE PICTURES I LOVED AS A LITTLE GIRL...
AND ONCE SUCH A TRIP WAS DESTINED, IT'S POSSIBLE THAT A DAME WITH MY LOOKS--LET'S NOT BE COY--MIGHT WELL BE TAPPED FOR STARDOM, EVEN BY ACCIDENT.
WH--?
AFTER ALL, EVEN IF THAT STORY ABOUT LANA TURNER AT SCHWAB'S AIN'T TRUE--AND I ADMIT THE CASTING COUCH IS LIKELIER THAN A SODA FOUNTAIN STOOL--SUCH THINGS DID HAPPEN...
...AND SINCE WE SAW THAT MOVIE IN TIMESQUARE, APPARENTLY IT DID HAPPEN, AND SINCE IT DID HAPPEN--
--THEN IT FOLLOWS THAT WE HAVE TO JUSTIFY THE PARADOX OF MY APPEARANCE AS A FULL-GROWN WOMAN IN A MOVIE MADE WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL...
...AND SINCE THAT JUSTIFICATION BECOMES THE GOAL OF THE MISSION...
...THEN THE VERY REASON FOR THE PARADOX BECOMES AT ONE AND THE SAME FUN TIME THE VERY SOLUTION TO IT.
;GRRR;
AHOOOGAH!

THAT SOUNDS LIKE HAROLD LLOYD'S AGENT'S ROADSTER NOW, ACE!
DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME...
...BUT I'LL TRY TO BE HOME NO LATER THAN DAWN.
AND THE DAMNED THING OF IT IS...
VARIETY
STARRY STARLET STAR STIX PIX
RELAX-SHE COULD BE RIGHT.
AND SO HOT DAYS WAX AND WANE, IN WAYS OF ONE WEIRDNESS..
CUT!
OR ANOTHER.
CARRIED THROUGH TIME BY TMA.
THICKER THAN SLUG-SLIME, ANYWAY.
BUT LABREA IS STILL A DISAPPOINTMENT.

AND, FINALLY!
ACE, YOU'LL NEVER GUESS!
MR. DEMILLE IS TOYING WITH THE NOTION OF REMAKING CLEOPATRA AGAIN!
SOME OF THE EXECS ARE PUSHING CLAUDETTE COLBERT, BUT HE WANTS ME TO DO A TEST! ISN'T THAT WONDERF--
CLEOPATRA?
YES, ACE! IT'S BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS--THE PART I WAS BORN TO PLAY!
SO HOW DID YOU FINALLY MEET DEMILLE?
OOPS--DID I FORGET TO MENTION? I FINISHED MY PART IN, UM, SIGN OF THE CROSS TODAY.
THE SCENE WE SAW IN TIMES SQUARE--WITH LAUGHTON?
M-HM, AND YOU'D REALLY LIKE CHUCKIE, ACE--HE'S SUCH A SWEET MAN, AND A SUPERB THESPIAN, OF COURSE.
HE SAID I HAVE A LOT OF--
THAT DOES IT--COME ON!
BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING?
TO THAT BARREL OF SCRAPPED FILM IN THE CUTTING ROOM!
NO!
YOU'VE DONE IT, BRIDGET--
--LEGITIMIZED THE PARADOX OF YOUR APPEARANCE IN THAT FILM--
--SO LET'S SPLIT WHILE THE TIME IS STILL RIGHT--
--WHILE THE GLITCHES ARE STILL LAYING LOW!
NO, ACE!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NO? HAVE YOU COMPLETELY LOST YOUR-
I CAN'T LEAVE NOW, NOT WHEN THINGS ARE GOING SO SWIMMINGLY! ONE OF THE FAN-MASS IS EVEN THINKING OF RUNNING A SPREAD ON ME AND--
BRIDGET, IT ISN'T A LARK ANY MORE, IS IT? NO MORE BRIDGET-SAY-RELAX--YOU'VE REALLY LOOPED OUT!
YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS, ACE! BUT IF IT WAS YOU RUBBIN' SHOULDERS WITH DIETRICH, GARBO, AND HARLOW--
HAVE YOUR HOTSHOT LEADING MEN BEEN SPOONING YOU COCAINE OR-
YES, I AM JEALOUS, DAMMIT! AND I'M ALSO AFRAID MY SUSPICIONS WERE ACCURATE-EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT AWARE OF IT!
YOU MEAN... SUSPICIONS ABOUT ME BEING AN EBONATI DOUBLE-AGENT?
MAYBE NOT EBONATI, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING MORE ABOUT YOU-ABOUT YOUR PAST-- THAN YOU KNOW!
DON'T BE ABSURD, CAESAR-- I'VE ALWAYS BEEN QUEEN OF THE NILE AND I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN IT.
HOLY CHRIST-THAT CUTS IT!
HUH? WHAT DID YOU SAY, ACE?
YOUR MIND WENT OFF THE DEEP END WEEKS AGO-
--AND NOW YOUR FLESH JUST BECAME A DOXIE-GLITCH THAT'LL ONLY GET WORSE AS TIME GOES BY!


ARE...ARE YOU...SURE?
JUST STAY HERE, BRIDGET! I'M GOING DOWN TO THE STUDIO TO EDIT EVERYTHING RIGHT OUT OF THE RECORD!
HOPING SHE'S NOT TOO FAR GONE TO STAY PUT-
Paramount Pictures
CUTTING ROOM
--I REACH THE STUDIO IN RECORD ROADSTER TIME...
...AND WITH MY SCRAMBACK ENERGY ACTING AS A GRAPPLING LINE--
--I CLEAR THE WALL EVEN QUICKER
IN THE CUTTING ROOM, ALMOST EVERYTHING FILMED SINCE WE ARRIVED IS CANNED ON THE SHELVES.
ONLY THE FOOTAGE FROM SIGN OF THE CROSS, SHOT JUST TODAY AND NOT YET PROCESSED, IS MISSING

HERE YA ARE, LADY--THE FAMOUS GATES O' PARAMOUNT.

THANKS, DRIVER--KEEP THE CHANGE.

HELLO, HAL.

OLIVE? THIS IS HAL.

LISTEN, THAT CLEO JAMES DAME JUST CAME THROUGH THE GATE ACTIN' FUNNY --SAYS SHE'S LOOKIN' FOR THE HANDBAG THAT'S HANGING ON HER ARM...

I, UH, FORGOT MY PURSE THIS AFTERNOON.

GUITAR PICKS

FINISHED. COUNTING THESE LAST SNIPPETS OF BRIDGET AS A MEDIEVAL WENCH, I'VE EDITED OUT VIRTUALLY EVERY STRIP--EVERY FRAME--OF FILM IN WHICH SHE IMPOSSIBLY APPEARS.

SINCE WE SAW IT IN '69, I'M ASSUMING THE TIMELINE CAN TOLERATE HER BIT-PART IN SIGN OF THE--

I CAN'T LET YOU DO IT, ACE

I CAN'T LET THAT HAP--

THEN SHE IS TOO FAR GONE

YOU'RE DESTROYING MY CAREER--PREVENTING ME FROM BECOMING A STAR.

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE--AND MEET THE STUDIO DICK WHOSE EMPLOYERS DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO SABOTAGE OF ITS PRODUCT BY TWO QUEER BIRDS LIKE YOU!

NO--CAN'T LET HIM OR ANYONE ELSE GET HOLD OF BRIDGET'S CELLULOID IMAGES.

EVEN AS THE SCRAMBACK'S ENERGY EXPLODES.

BRIDGET SCREAMS, ALMOST IN PAIN

VEEBEEBEEB

NO, ACE!!

GODDAMIT!

YOU TWO ARE IN DEEPER SHIT THAN I THOUGHT!

FIRE

DRIVING

AND THE ALARM IS LIKE A CUE FOR THE DOXIE-GLITCHES TO RISE FROM THE FLAMES AND TAKE THEIR MARKS

SIX VERSIONS OF BRIDGET, COSTUMES AND MAKEUP IMPROBABLE AND OVERDONE--INCUBATED TO TERM BY THE HEAT OF THEIR MISTRESS'S STILLBORN SCREEN CAREER.

IF F...M CAN BE CALLED ART, IT IS IMITATING LIFE--AND THEY GLARE AT THEIR ORIGINAL MOLD, AT BRIDGET HERSELF, WITH DEATH IN THEIR EYES

SINCE THE BARREL IS FILLED WITH FIRE--THROUGH WHICH WE CAN HARDLY BOLT BACK ABOARD THE A.C.E.--WE RUN INSTEAD.

HURRY UP--THE ALARM'S COMIN' FROM THE CUTTIN' ROOM!

ACROSS THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR WITH A VENGEANCE THE SIX BRIDGETS PURSUE.

IT IS A CHOICE SETTING FOR THE FINE CHAOS OF A KEYSTONE KOPS CAPER.

A BACKDROP OF SPLENDID, WRETCHED EXCESS.

THIS WAY, BRIDGET—INTO THE WESTERN TOWN!

FORGET THE FIRE! JUST GET THAT DAME!

WHAT DAME, DUKE?

ANY OF HER! ALL OF HER!

NOW THIS WAY—INTO THE NEW YORK CITY SET!

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO ME, ACE! I WANT TO BE LARGER THAN LIFE!

IT'S MY DESTINY! MY BIRTHRIGHT!

THERE SHE IS, BOYS—DRESSED UP LIKE A SQUAW!

NO—OVER THERE—LIKE A BARMAID!

MY PAST IS ONLY A FALSE IMPOSITION ON MY NEURAL MATRIX, SUPERSEDING MY REAL PAST!

LOU KINSOLVING WAS THE LAST HOPE OF GETTING TO THE TRUTH ABOUT ME!

MAYBE THE FIRE IN THE BARREL, IF NOT IN BRIDGET'S FEVERED BRAIN, HAS BY NOW BURNED OUT, WE CIRCLE BACK TO THE CUTTING ROOM, THE SIX CELLULOID DOPPELGANGERS NO LONGER IN SIGHT.

BUT WHEN I POSED AS A GHOST AND CONVINCED LOU TO DROP HIS INVESTIGATION, THAT HOPE WAS LOST!

DON'T YOU SEE, ACE! THAT'S ALSO WHAT BOTCHED PUER'S ABILITY TO REMEMBER OTHER TIMES—

—JAMMED HIS POWERS AND—

NOT SO FAST, REAL ONE!

HUH?!

AND NOW THAT THE SIX REEL ONES HAVE SHRUNK TO MIDGET ACROBATS—

—THEY TRANSFORM BACK TO A SINGLE STRIP OF FILM.

...WHICH SWIFTLY LENGTHENS AND STREAKS LIKE A CELLULOID SNAKE TO BRIDGET'S BREAST.
EVEN AS IT STRIKES, SHE CHANGES. FACE FAR LESS THAN COSTUME... AND WITH A CHILL I REALIZE THAT NEITHER IT NOR THE MAKEUP IS IMPROBABLE OR OVERDONE.
CATCHING HER, LEAP INTO THE SMOLDERING BARREL.
MY LAST SIGHT IS THAT OF THE STUDIO DICK, EYES HUGE, REACHING FOR HIS FLASK.
GUITAR PICKS
HOURS LATER ABOARD THE A C E., I DECIDE THE CELLULOID SERPENT WAS HISTORY'S WAY OF COUNTERING THE DISTORTIONS PERPETRATED UPON IT AND YET, HEAD SAYS SHE WILL LIVE.
CONQUERING HOLLYWOOD AS IF IT WERE DECADENT ROME ...ONE MAN OF POWER AFTER ANOTHER...CAME NATURALLY...BECAUSE I WAS ONCE...NO, STILL AM...THE ORIGINAL VAMP...SHE WHOM THEDA BARA WOULD DIE TO BE..
FARR OUT.
BUT TRUE; BRIDGET OF THE SHADY PAST IS REALLY CLEOPATAA-- AND HAS BEEN, FOR CENTURIES.
SMALL WONDER, THEN, THAT I WILL LOVE HER FOREVER.
"RELAX, DON'T DO IT, WHEN YOU WANNA GET TO IT, RELAX, DON'T DO IT, WHEN YOU WANNA COME "-- FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD, 1984

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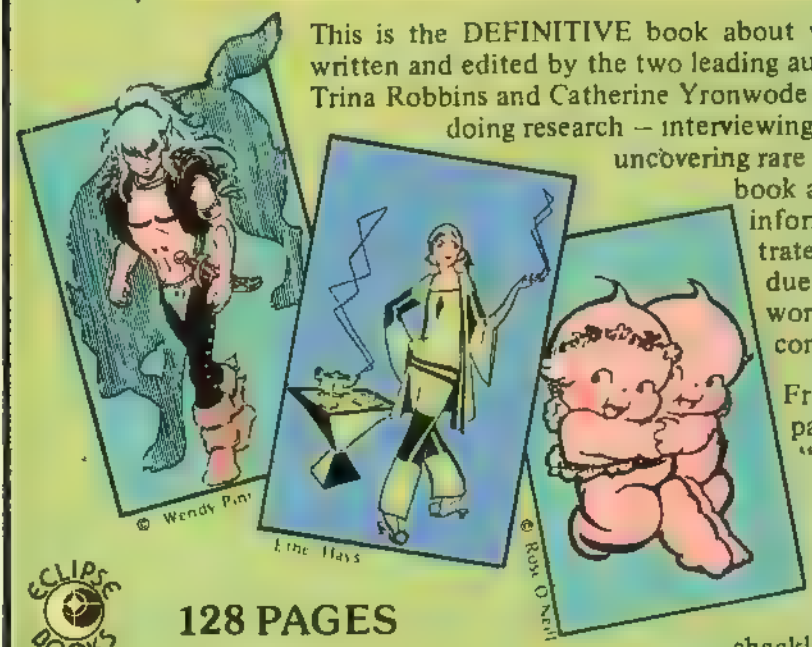

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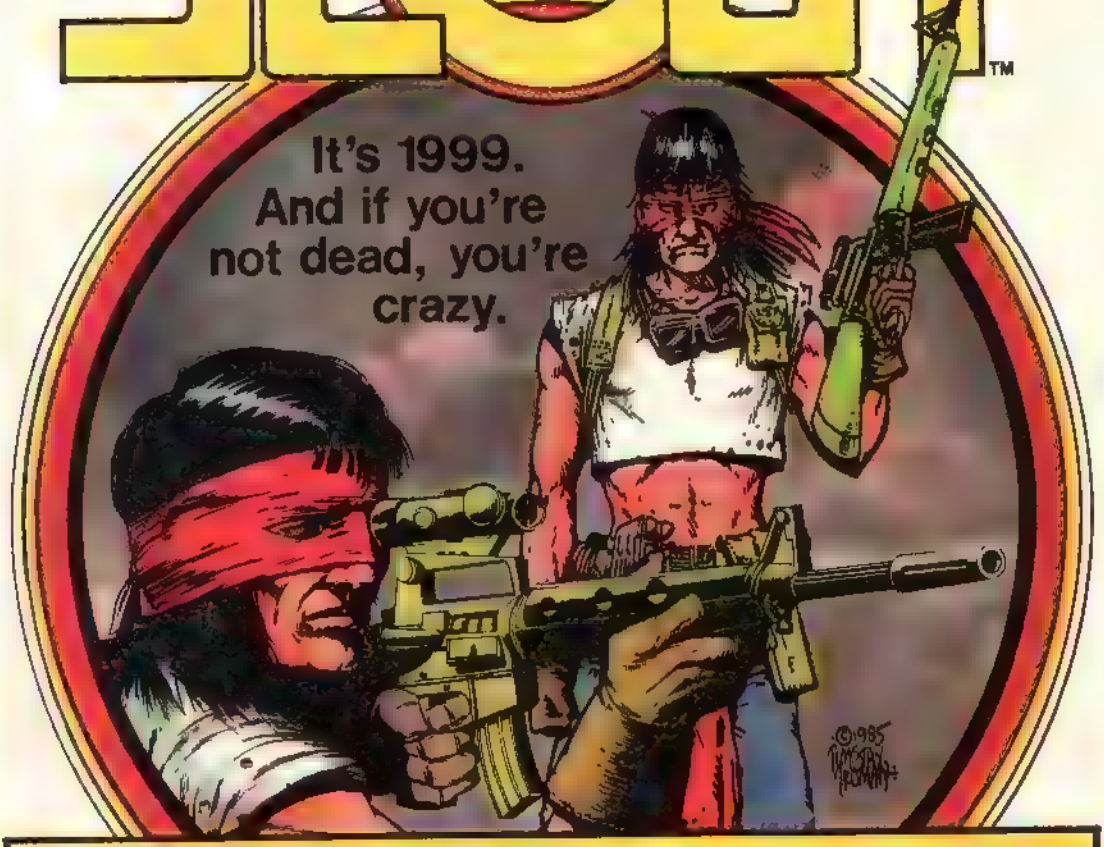

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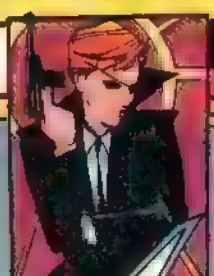

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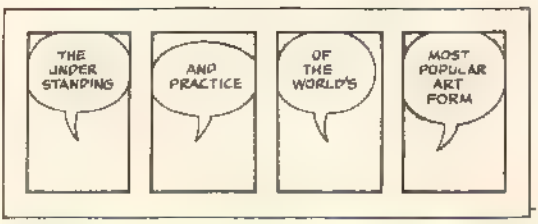

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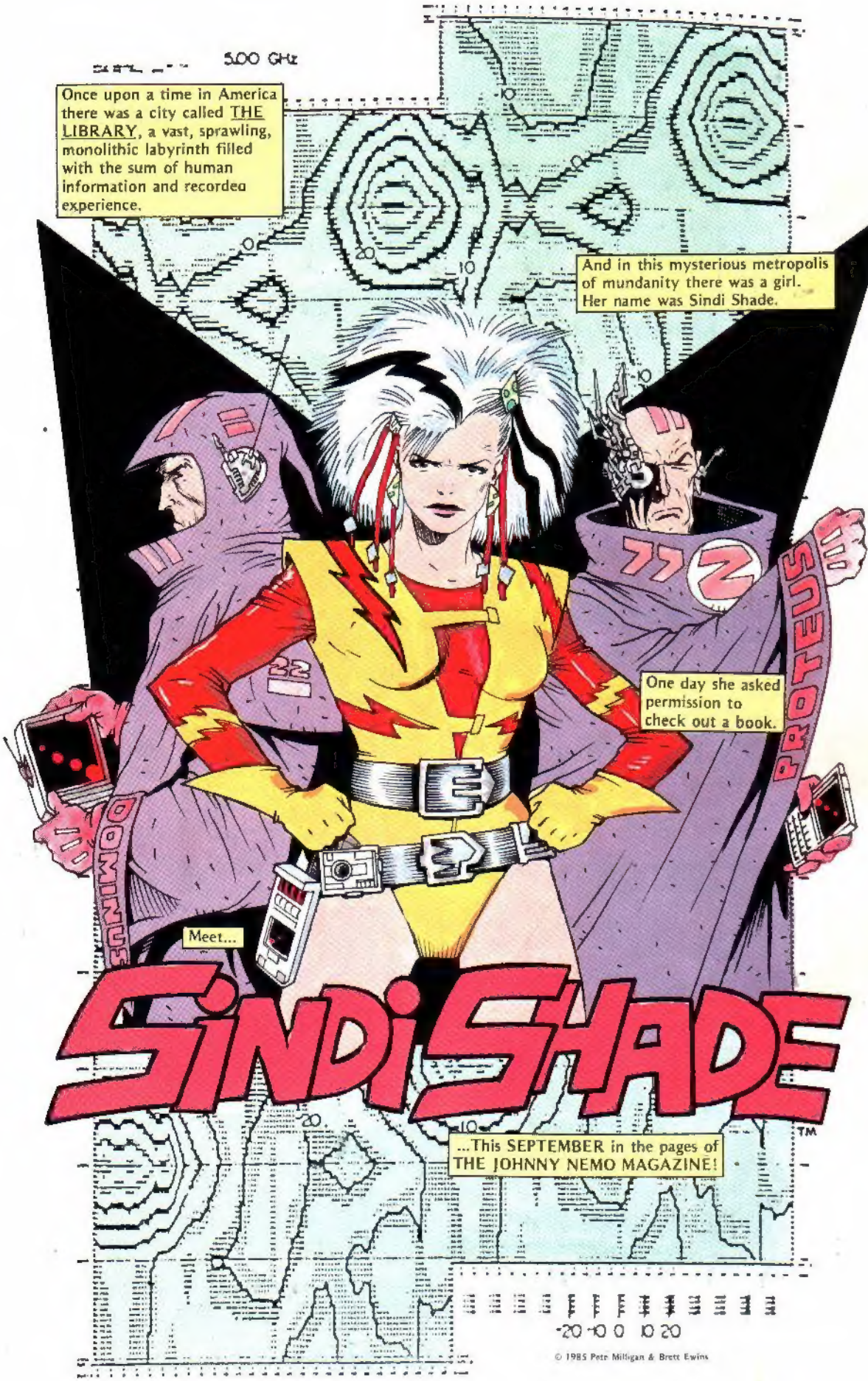
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